

# Movie Clip/Sliding Panel Exercises

*Adobe Flash CS4/CS5 and ActionScript 3.0*

These exercises show you how to use and control movie clip symbols.

<http://flashjournalism.com/CS4examples/movieClipControl/slidingPanel.html>

## Part I / Fading Panel

1. Open the FLA file named *panel\_blank fla*.
2. Save As: *panel\_fading fla*
3. Open the Library and drag the Sliding Panel movie clip symbol to the Stage. It should be in frame 1 of the “panel” layer in the Timeline.
4. Position the panel as you see fit.
5. Double-click the symbol on the Stage. You will see the movie clip’s timeline with three layers (actions, button, panel).
6. Double-click the panel *again*. Now you are inside the graphic symbol that will be tweened. There is only ONE frame in each layer, because *nothing* is supposed to move or be *tweened* here. Look up at the blue arrow (upper right corner) and you’ll see you are two levels deep in the FLA:  
Scene 1 > Sliding Panel > Panel
7. Click the blue arrow *once* to get up out of the graphic.  
Scene 1 > Sliding Panel
8. On the “panel” layer, add a motion tween.
9. Make the panel start transparent (alpha=0), go to fully opaque (alpha=100), and then go back to transparent. DO NOT add any frames. DO NOT change any ActionScript.

When you have a working tween (transparent, opaque, transparent), click the blue arrow again to go up to the **Main Timeline** of the FLA. (The blue arrow turns gray when you are at the top, on the Main Timeline.)

### Make the Info button work

This requires two steps:

1. Frame 1, Main Timeline: Open the Actions panel and *un-comment* the line in the function for info\_btn. (That means delete the two slashes in front of the line.)
2. Give the sliding panel movie clip the **instance name** it needs to have. (You can see this instance name in the line you just un-commented.)

**Save and test the movie.** Click the Info button multiple times to see how it works. Then review the script on the Main Timeline *and in the movie clip timeline*.

### **Add the Close button to the movie clip**

Many users would have to think about how to close the opened information panel if you did not include a Close button on the panel itself. Therefore, that is the best thing to do. (Don't be lazy just because the Info button can be used to close the panel.)

1. Double-click the sliding panel movie clip on the Stage to go inside it.  
Scene 1 > Sliding Panel
2. Click the keyframe at frame 20 in the "button" layer.
3. Open the Library and drag the Close button symbol to the Stage. Position it on the white panel. This button needs an instance name, but wait a moment.
4. Click frame 20 in the "actions" layer and open the Actions panel. You can see a button EventListener that is commented out. Un-comment that line (delete the two slashes in front of the line).
5. That EventListener tells you what the **instance name** for your Close button must be. Give the button the correct instance name.

**Save and test the movie.** Click the Info button to open the fading panel and then click the Close button on the panel. Note that the Info button still works to close the panel. Neither button interferes with the other.

Review the script on the Main Timeline *and in the movie clip timeline.*

If you have any questions about how any of the script works, or anything else, ASK!

### **Part 2/ Sliding Panel**

1. Open the FLA file named *panel\_blank fla*.
2. Save As: *panel\_sliding fla*
3. Follow the same instructions given above, except this time you are going to make the panel slide in (from the side) and slide out again (the same way) *instead of* fading in and fading out.

This is a puzzle to be solved, and you should be able to reason it out.

Make sure you start over again with a fresh, untouched copy of *panel\_blank fla*. If you try to do it within the completed fading version, you are not as likely to learn what I'm trying to teach you. *Start over fresh.*

Handle the Close button as you did in the previous exercise.

When you have finished, the Info button should both slide the panel into view and slide the panel out of view. The Close button should also slide the panel out of view.

## Part 3/ An Invisible Button

When your sliding version of the panel exercise is working perfectly, save it as a new FLA with a new filename: *panel\_sliding2.fla*

1. Go inside the movie clip (double-click the panel on the Stage).
2. Click the keyframe at frame 20 in the “button” layer. (It should have a black dot, because your Close button should be there.)
3. Right-click to get the menu, and choose Clear Keyframe. (The black dot becomes white, and your button is gone.)
4. Open the Library and drag the Invisible button symbol to the Stage (you are still on frame 20 in the “buttons” layer). Position it perfectly to cover the white panel.
5. In the Properties panel, give this button the instance name *close\_btn*.
6. Save and test the movie.

How does the Invisible button work? Open it up and look at the four button frames. What is in each one? *Click* on each frame inside the button symbol and figure it out!

<http://flashjournalism.com/tips/invisiblebutton.htm>

**Question:** Should the button still be present in the movie clip “buttons” layer after the button begins sliding out of sight?

If you don’t understand it, ASK.

## Part 4/ Build a Movie Clip from Scratch

In this exercise you will start with a FLA that has no movie clip and no buttons to control the movie clip. You will build an original movie clip and script two buttons to control it.

1. Open the file named *blank\_movieclip.fla*.
2. Command-Return (or Ctrl-Enter) to spawn a SWF. Test all the buttons.
3. Close the SWF. Examine the Library and the Main Timeline.
4. Make a new layer above the other content layers (but *below* “actions” and “labels,” as per best practices). Name it “movie clip” (without the quotes).
5. Make sure all the other layers are *locked*.
6. Draw something (a circle or rectangle is okay). Convert to symbol. Make it a Graphic symbol (it will help you not be confused in your Library if this is *not* a Movie Clip). Give the symbol a practical name. If it’s a circle, name it Circle, for example.
7. Double-click your new symbol on the Stage, **add a new layer** *inside it*, and write something there (maybe your name).
8. Blue arrow: Exit from Symbol Editing Mode. Back to the Main Timeline.
9. Now select your symbol on the Stage by clicking it once (if you see the blue arrow now, you did it wrong). Convert to Symbol—yes, again. **THIS TIME** choose Movie Clip.

You are creating a new symbol that *contains* the first symbol.

Think carefully about how you *name* your symbols. How will you differentiate this one from the plain Graphic? If the Graphic is named Circle, maybe the MC should be named Moving Circle, or Circle Clip, or Circle Animation ... see?

10. Don't forget to save your FLA.
11. Now you have a movie clip that contains a symbol that can be animated. That's the next step. Go inside the movie clip timeline. It will have only one layer at this point (named "Layer 1," of course). If you have accidentally clicked twice and gone down to the other symbol, you'll see two layers (if you did what Step 7 said).  
**Animate the symbol:** Make it move *off* the Stage, and then move back *onto* the Stage. This will create two or three keyframes after the first one. Keep the timeline short (1 or 2 seconds at most). Keep it simple.
12. Save and test the movie. Click all the buttons again. Click them in various orders. Do you understand how the movie clip is related to the Main Timeline?

Examine your Library. Double-click each of your two symbols there. Make sure you understand the construction you have made so far.

### Add Two Buttons

You can use the black button (Pushie) that is already in the Library.

1. Unlock the buttons layer on the Main Timeline. Drag the Pushie symbol out (frame 1).
2. Script that button to make your movie clip **PLAY**. Look at the previous examples if necessary. Do not forget the **instance name** for the movie clip!
3. Go to your movie clip timeline (it has only one layer, remember?). Add a new layer and name it "actions."
4. At a frame where your symbol is fully off the Stage (somewhere in the middle of the "actions" layer in the movie clip timeline), add a *new blank keyframe*.
5. In frame 1 AND in the keyframe you just made, write a `stop ( ) ;` action.
6. Save and test the movie. Your movie clip should not move at all until you click your new button. When you click that button a second time, the rest of your animation should play.

Make sure you understand what the button is doing. If you don't, ASK.

1. Create a new *invisible button* that is the same size and shape as the symbol in your movie clip.
2. Go to your movie clip timeline (it has two layers now; one is "actions"). Add another new layer and name it "button." Drag your invisible button to frame 1 in the "button" layer and place it perfectly over the symbol.
3. Name the instance of this button.
4. Write an EventListener for this button *in the movie clip timeline*.
5. Write a function for this button *in the movie clip timeline*. The function should simply make *this* timeline **PLAY**.
6. Save and test the movie.